

MAGONIA⁶⁰



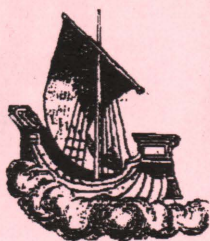
INTERPRETING CONTEMPORARY VISION AND BELIEF

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**PETER BROOKESMITH AND PETER ROGERSON LOOK AT
THE WORLD OF CONSPIRACY THEORIES
AND MARK PILKINGTON CHECKS OUT WHAT'S
RAELY GOING ON!**

PLUS BOOKS AND BACKPAGE



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An organised distortion of memory

As this issue of *Magonia* is being prepared, *The Mail on Sunday* (29 June 1997) reports that the Royal College of Psychiatrists has received a report which condemns recovered memory therapy techniques and concludes that no 'recovered memories' of child abuse have ever been proven. The newspaper adds that the report has not yet been published because of "deep divisions... within the psychiatric profession".

The report was commissioned by the RCP following the controversy over recovered memory claims of abuse which resulted in high profile cases in Nottingham, Rochdale, Orkney Islands, and elsewhere. It was produced by Professor Sydney Brandon a retired professor of psychiatry at Leicester University. The report highlights the damage which has been done to individuals and families by the use of 'recovered memory' therapy: "The effects of distorted truth should not be overlooked. The damage done to families if the accusations are untrue is immense. The damage to the individual is less obvious, but mental health based upon an organised distortion of memory may prove precarious."

The *Mail on Sunday's* report ends with the words "It is too late to protect some from over-enthusiastic therapists but the words of the report should ensure that the witch-hunt is over." Unfortunately this will certainly not be the case. The backlash against critics of 'recovered memories' and 'Satanic ritual abuse' is well underway. A recent Channel 4 TV series has attempted rehabilitation of some previously discredited cases - a

series in which Tim Tate, producer of the notorious *Cook Report* on SRA, was involved, and as we saw in Basil Humphrey's report in *Magonia* 59, these ideas are still being promoted and received enthusiastically within the social work milieu. What is particularly disturbing about recovered memory therapy as described in this report, is that it is not confined to a fringe group of therapists. A survey by the British Psychological Society showed that "50% of [responding therapists] had at least one client recovering memories of some sort, and that 90% of these clinicians believed that such memories were essentially accurate."

Recovered memories of UFO abductions may not have the impact on other people as claims of abuse, as there is not the direct accusation of abuse against an individual. This does not make them any less damaging to the individuals involved. The report is particularly dismissive of the 'checklists' used by many therapists to identify possible victims: "Many so-called checklists are so all-embracing that few people would be excluded... One article in an American journal advises: 'if you identify with five or more [symptoms] yet have no memory of incest, you might try an exercise. Accept the theory that you have been abused, live consciously with the idea for six months, in context with an awareness of the traits you acknowledge, and see whether any memories come to you.'"

Apart from gasping at the sheer irresponsibility of this, when other people and families are involved, consider how closely this attitude resembles the

techniques of the American abductionists. The 'five or more symptoms' sounds like nothing so much as the 'Roper Poll', which is still taken seriously by some ufologists. In this anyone who reported having experienced three or four odd incidents from off a checklist was considered to be an abductee. It is only a step from this to "accepting the theory that you were abducted" with encouragement from witness support groups and abductionist investigators. Well within six months anybody who has fallen into this trap will become "aware of traits" which reinforce the newly created belief.

As with the therapists, the role of the abductionist is to reinforce the belief system. It does not really concern either to actually examine the facts of a particular case: feelings and memory are everything, and are not to be challenged by police or sceptical researchers.

This report makes it clear that recovered memory therapies are dangerous, and this is not limited to 'hypnotic regression', any 'assisted recall' has the potential for damage even if, as is claimed by both therapists and abductionists, the subjects seem to benefit from it: "Where an individual's apparent improvement is based upon a false belief which has distorted both the individual's past and relationships with his or her family there seems to be a possibility of further mental distress."

What are the abductionists storing up for the future? Whose will be the first life to be destroyed by an abductionist after a few years of fame on the UFO lecture circuit? How can we make them stop now? JR

A PLAGUE OF ALIENS

VISIONARY RUMOUR AS CONTEMPORARY AND COSTUME DRAMA

The current expression of conspiracy beliefs in ufology operates at two levels. The overarching theme is an essential conviction that those in power are in some way colluding with alien visitors - whether through secret treaties or simply by exploiting recovered alien technology - to the detriment of humanity. Specific 'evidence' of dark deeds and darker intentions on the part of government - such as threatening visits by black helicopters, the USAF's stance on the Roswell affair, and the refusal of Juan Perez da Cuella to admit he was once abducted wearing blue pyjamas - spangles a backcloth of improbable allegations that is part ufological rumour, part political nightmare.

Martin Kottmeyer has argued (and won a prize for saying) that UFO sighting reports increase in number during times of national paranoia and uncertainty. [*1] I find Kottmeyer's thesis compelling, and noted that in the 12 months before the 1997 British general election, sighting reports and extravagant claims mushroomed in the UK. At the same time the number of apparently successful newsstand publications focusing on the paranormal, ufology and conspiracy theories soared. Some of this growth in public fascination with these themes can be ascribed to ufology's half-centenary - in particular that of the Roswell Incident - and some to the long slow rise of millennium fever, which complicate the analysis somewhat. But it will be interesting to see if sighting reports (and magazine circulations) in the UK fall away somewhat during 1998, as the media's ufological feedback loop begins to break up and any residual nervousness over the character of the new government settles into traditional quiet British desperation. If this happens,

In a desperate attempt to compensate for the non-arrival at Magonia's plush offices of the third part of his series 'Communion Cups and Crashed Saucers',

PETER BROOKESMITH

examines how a revealing folklore is being woven under our very noses - and notes how rabidly paranoid ufology shares its ideas and imagery with other apocalyptic and extremist movements

Kottmeyer's hypothesis will be borne out, as will my suspicion that by and large the Brits - unlike our American cousins - are neither enchanted nor mesmerised the approach of the millennium.

At the same time, one has to bear in mind that only 30 per cent of the UK's enfranchised actually cast their votes for New Labour. From a recognition that the first-past-the-post system would often produce large majorities for parliamentary parties from a minority of voters, the British convention arose that members of parliament were not party delegates, but represented all their constituents, re-

gardless of political affiliation. Among New Labour's many secret Bennite vices there is a proclivity to abandon this crucial check on administrative megalomania. So I may be being optimistic here, in suggesting that British politics will sink back into the stupor called consensus. It may yet dawn on the British that some of New Labour's bright ideas - such as fingerprinting and DNA-sampling children at birth (ostensibly to prevent welfare fraud in later life!), along with its civilian disarmament programme, its criminalization of rural traditions, the proposed introduction of national ID cards, regulation of the

Internet, and probably unconstitutional extension of police powers of surveillance, search and arrest; to name but a few - are in the robust traditions of Stalinism and carry exactly the same implications of distrust of "the people". Not for nothing was Home Secretary Jack "Boo!" Straw once a fervent Marxist revolutionary. The British have always been both complacent and ambivalent about their own liberties, and have sleepily colluded with politicians and the media in expunging the very word "liberty", and the concept with it, from the national political vocabulary.

This apparent rant is not beside the point in the context of contemporary vision and belief: the conspiracy industry has thrived in the USA precisely because of a widespread perception that government is no longer "by the people, and for the people", but embodies a surreptitious but radical assault on the US Constitution and citizenry. As US President Gerald Ford put it, "The American wage earner and the American housewife... know that a govern-

ment big enough to give you everything you want is a government big enough to take from you everything you have." The new British government, in taking to its bosom the worst totalitarian tendencies of the ousted Tory regime, has all the potential to drive British subjects to the same realisation. In that case, one might expect the indices of sullen resentment, popular bolshiness (an expanding black market, fiscal obstructionism, street and white-collar crime) and conspiratorial folklore alike to rise at roughly the same rate in the UK over the next five years. One may also expect government to provide repressive legislation in inverse proportion to its popularity, and to demonstrate the truth of Thomas Jefferson's dictum that a nation that trades liberty for control will neither get nor deserve either. We shall see.

Jefferson also famously remarked: "The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants. It is its natural manure." Whether Sarah Brady and Bill Clinton misconstrue it or like it or not, the cornerstone of the US Constitution is the Second Amendment: the right of the people to keep and bear arms (RKBA). That constitutional right was derived from British law and practice, most pithily expressed in Sir William Blackstone's *Commentaries On The Laws of England* (published 1765-9) as one of the five "auxiliary rights" of the people, without which their "natural" rights to personal security, personal liberty and private property would be "dead letters". Thus we expect, and duly find, that RKBA finds its way into ufological paranoia, [*2] while it is a mainstay of American political paranoia - the militia or "patriot" movement - and even manifests itself in religious paranoia (of which more below).

Readers may be forgiven for wondering if, in raising these points, the pretender (albeit so far unchallenged) to the title *Best Pistol Shot In Ufology* isn't finding a thin excuse for riding a hobbyhorse at the expense of relevant argument. My point here is that inherent in US political culture is a deep popular suspicion of government per se. (In contrast, in the UK it is government that traditionally distrusts the governed. Both stances have their justifications, risks and pitfalls.) In any polity that - however abstractly - maintains the principle that any

action or aspect of government is questionable, there will be fertile soil for paranoid imaginings. The price of liberty is rightly said to be eternal vigilance, but it is also eternal tolerance for the sensitive, the meddlesome and the malicious, and the dangerously deluded. All of whom are implicitly recognised and protected by the First Amendment.

IRONY IN THE SOUL

Sometimes things really are as simple as they seem: and just because you're paranoid, it doesn't mean they're not out to get you. I long believed that the grandfather of conspiracy theories in ufology was Donald Keyhoe. By the end of this year two books bearing my name will be in print saying just that. Staying in Toronto earlier this year I spied upon my hosts' shelves none other than Frank Scully's *The Saucers Have Landed*. On one level the interest of this book is how it came to be written. [*3] It has long been out of print, and I would guess that I am not alone in having pontificated about its significance without having read the work itself. For connoisseurs of ufological conspiracy theories, reading Scully is a revelation.

From his preface to his conclusion the man rages against the US Government. But Scully had every reason to be outraged, dismayed and alarmed. In his own mind, he could conclude that the civil and military authorities were lying about UFOs because he could see all about him the results of McCarthyism in Hollywood: if government could so abuse its trust and its power, it would follow that such moral corruption would have in train a refusal to admit the truth about the saucers. The logic is scarcely impeccable, but the strength of feeling is unmistakable and indubitably sincere. It's altogether plausible that his inherited, "natural" distrust of government and the stark reality of McCarthyism led Scully, plainly a liberal man, to presume that the baffled and confusing yet desperately "authoritative" pronouncements of the USAF à propos flying saucers were calculated to cover up the ufological truth as he believed he had uncovered it. It was this theme, shorn of its real political context, onto which Keyhoe latched, and about which he so profitably fantasised. Keyhoe organised the



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ideas of governmental conspiracies and cover-up, but he did not invent them. The differences between the two men may be characterised as a matter of gullible sincerity on the one hand and pulp-writer's opportunism on the other. [*4] Despite the masses of documentation that contradicts it, Keyhoe's imaginary history of the USAF's engagement with UFOs is still, astonishingly, held by some in high regard. So we witness a curious condition of ufology-at-large, which is to prefer the certainties of the imagination to the ambiguities of reality.

INTO THE DARKNESS

The most complete and self-consistent conspiracy "theory" in ufology is probably the one that derives ultimately from the alleged abduction of Myra Hansen in May 1980, whose investigation was attended by Albuquerque businessman Paul Bennewitz. The Bennewitz affair has many ramifications, which are too convoluted to summarise here. [*5] But in the early 1980s Bennewitz produced a stream of astounding claims about human-alien contact, most of it detrimental to humanity. In the late 1980s his contentions were taken up and elaborated by Bill English, John Lear and, most egregiously, William Milton Cooper - who, when asked about his sources, tended to respond in classic fashion, by accusing those who doubted his revelations of working for the CIA. Lear and Cooper in particular developed a conspiracy legend that combined Bennewitz's fables with the then newly-discovered MJ-12 operation.

In May 1989, Cooper posted on the Internet *The Secret Government*, which took the opening notion that "MJ-12 has total control over everything" to its logical, if unlikely, conclusion: the group really ran the country, and in a fashion that made nonsense of everything that everyone took for granted about life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. But MJ-12 and its international cronies in the Tri-lateral Commission, the Bilderberg group and other bodies were in turn the stooges of the aliens. Said Cooper: "Throughout our history the Aliens have manipulated and/or ruled the human race through various secret societies, religion, magic, witchcraft, and the occult." The secret government plans to exploit the alien and conven-

tional technology in order for a select few to leave the earth and establish colonies in outer space. I am not able to either confirm or deny the existence of 'Batch Consignments' of human slaves which would be used for manual labour in the effort as part of the plan. The Moon, code named 'Adam', would be the object of primary interest followed by the planet Mars, code named 'Eve'. As a delaying action, [the plan] included birth control, sterilisation, and the introduction of deadly microbes to control or slow the growth of the Earth's population. AIDS is only ONE result of these plans.

Connoisseurs will recognise how much of this borrows from the famous spoof TV documentary *Alternative 3*, as if it had been the real McCoy. There was much more, about the self-destruction of Earth "by or shortly after the year 2000", plant life flourishing on the "dark side of the Moon", and the assertion that in the 1960s future US president George Bush established the international drugs trade as part of a scheme to encourage street violence, generate revulsion against guns, and thereby disarm the American people. Thus, at the level of satire, gun-control campaigner Sarah Brady becomes the stooge of spacemen; but at the level of myth the foundations of the USA are being shaken.

Cooper also maintained that one in every 40 people carries an alien implant, that the US space program is a gigantic hoax. When President John F. Kennedy announced the plan to put a man on the Moon, Cooper wrote,

"In fact a joint alien, United States, and Soviet Union base already existed on the moon at the very moment Kennedy spoke the words. ... A public charade of antagonism between the Soviet Union and the United States has been maintained over all these years in order to fund projects in the name of National Defense when in fact we are the closest allies."

In this Cooper sets up his ufological audience for the ultimate bogey of both the patriot movement (the "constitutional militias") and American Christian fundamentalists - the New World Order (NWO), a catchphrase of "drug baron" George Bush and, incidentally, of Freemasonry. The patriots view this composite mythical beast in politi-

cal terms: its agent is the United Nations, and its aim is the destruction of national identities, most especially the identity of the USA - not least through gun control, but mind control, credit cards, federal income tax and the liberal education system rank pretty high too. Fundamentalists see the NWO as the secular arm of the Devil's grand plan, as part of the End Times that are (always!) imminently upon us. Both David Koresh's and Marshall Hepplewhite's religious cults stockpiled weapons of all descriptions to protect themselves against official assault; and to judge by their own publications many militia groups have blurred any distinction between religious and secular apocalypse and the need for arms for self-defence. All are alarmed at the sight of black helicopters, those scouts of the UFO Cover-Up Organization, the NWO and Satan alike. The Men In Black have taken wing. [*6]

THE USUAL SUSPECTS

Naturally Cooper had to find someone to be responsible for all this. Rather unimaginatively, Cooper chose the Jews to carry the can. In his book he went so far as to reproduce the entire text of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, a notorious document that pretends to reveal a hideous Jewish plot to dominate the world. It was exposed as a fake in the early 1920s, but was enormously popular in antisemitic circles in Russia and Germany before World War II. However, the accusation, mad as it is, is a good illustration of how ufology has essentially consisted of a limited number of ideas that rise and fall from fashion only to be resurrected in a fresh mutation after a few years. Cooper was only the latest in a series of unsavoury characters in ufology who have fastened on antisemitic mythology to "explain" human inadequacy in the face of the aliens, or even in the face of life's irremediable difficulties.

George Hunt Williamson, a so-called "psychic" channeller and longtime associate of George Adamski, wrote as early as 1953 of "negative space intelligences" that were controlled by both evil aliens and the "International Bankers" a code word, like "cosmopolitans", among antisemites for the Jews. Said Williamson:

"These secret world rulers will never allow official UFO announcements to be made to the public. If they did allow it, it would spell their doom. If the technology of the space visitors is revealed it will immediately limit the need for... practically everything... that... keeps every family in America on a credit-buying spree...."

Williamson also explained that the "Silence Group" identified by Donald Keyhoe was an "ancient, hideous conspiracy that is nothing but the spirit of the anti-Christ". This more or less completes the circle that links Williamson's batty splutterings with those of the Internet entity "Branton", whose mythopoetic ramblings bring a lashing of rococo to the baroque fantasies of Bennewitz, Lear and Cooper.

But the reality of the Darksiders' claims is not really the issue here. What is revealed in the long link between George Hunt Williamson, George Adamski and the present-day Darksiders is how much they have in common with the likes of George King, Ruth Norman, Gordon Creighton and Billy Meier (who has unashamedly antisemitic followers as well as his own apocalyptic vision), whose perception of "flying saucers" is overtly religious. Consciously or not, much of the structure of the conspiracy buffs' thinking derives unmistakably from the Christian tradition and the New Testament's Book of Revelations - which is sufficiently obscure, and violent, to support almost any destructive belief. For many ufologists of the late 1990s, UFOs and ufonauts were either demonic or harbingers of fundamental, revelatory or creative change. Their inductive justifications for their beliefs is identical in structure, and often in metaphorical detail, to those of the patriots and fundamentalists. At the apex of conspiracy beliefs, the ufological, political and religious aspects become indistinguishable. If that tends to support the notion that ufology is at heart a religious pursuit (and sceptics are not immune to this snare or excluded from the analysis), it also reminds us that ufology has a political dimension, and of a nature that it would be unwise to ignore. Today Cooper embodies the point: he has espoused the patriot movement and disclaims his ufological writings.

1 Martin Kottmeyer, "UFO Flaps", *The Anomalist* No 3 (1996), pages 64-89.

2 And true to form we find that the RKBA has been usurped in the UK by the paranoia of the authorities in successive pieces of legislation since 1920. In that year the British Government entertained a real (if groundless) fear of a Bolshevik uprising and instituted the first step in a continuing programme of civilian/victim disarmament. As an aside, it's worthy of note that Blackstone's third "natural" right is private property; for the revolutionaries of the American colonies, it was the pursuit of happiness. In heaven - to recall T.S. Eliot - I shall not only "have talk with Coriolanus / And other heroes of that kidney", but invite Blackstone and Jefferson for chocolate, and politely raise the question of this difference.

3 See Andy Roberts's illuminating essay "Saucerful of Secrets" in Hilary Evans and John Spencer (eds), *UFOs 1947-87*, Fortean Tomes 1987, pages 156-9.

4 A devastating exposé of Donald Keyhoe's intellectual dishonesty can be found in Curtis Peebles, *Watch The Skies!*, Berkeley 1995, *passim*.

5 Jerome Clark's invaluable 3-volume *UFO Encyclopedia* addresses various aspects of the case under several entries (see the Cumulative Index in Volume 3). The chapter 'Beyond Dreamland' in Peter Brookesmith, *UFO: The Government Files*, Barnes & Noble (USA)/Blandford (UK) 1996, outlines the evolution of the case into the Dark-side Hypothesis and points to some of its antecedents and its significance in ufology.

6 A reliable guide to the thinking of the religious right on the NWO is Pat Robertson, *The New World Order*, World Books, 1991. No mention of black helicopters in this one, though.

7 As Hilary Evans pointed out in *Visions - Apparitions - Alien Visitors* (Aquarian Press, 1984), the MIB have forebears in religious as well as ufological imagery; and the latter derives from political imagery - the G-men of Hollywood B-movies.

PLAGUES AND PARANOIA

Those who are so susceptible to the lure of conspiracy theories seem to be unaware that they are following an age-old pattern in their response to an intractable mystery. The history of disease provides some telling parallels.

When the people of 14th-century Europe found themselves reeling before the onslaught of the Black Death (which they called the "Great Dying"), their religion-drenched culture led them either to blame themselves and their sins for the catastrophe visited on them by a vengeful God, or to lash out at the Jews, strangers in their midst who in Christian thinking were also estranged from God. From there it was not difficult to believe Jewish people were devil-worshippers intent on destroying good Christians. Finicky questions as to how, exactly, anyone at all could possibly control and direct such an indiscriminate disease, were brushed aside or ascribed to demonic, magical powers. (A favourite explanation was that Jews were poisoning the wells of Christians.) Countless innocents were murdered as a consequence of this kind of thinking, if "thinking" it can be called; but it is alive and well in Darkside ufology.

When cholera raged throughout Europe in the 19th century, those at the bottom of the social heap inevitably suffered more than did the rich from the effects of such crude defences against the disease as quarantines and cordons sanitaires. Resentment at rocketing food prices brought about by quarantine regulations turned soon enough among the poor to a search for someone to blame. Rumours flourished that cholera was caused by a poison put about by the rich to rid themselves of a troublesome underclass. Bear in mind that this was the era - the late 1840s and early 1850s - that saw half the nations in Europe seized by revolutionary fervour: 1848 saw uprisings and insurrections across the whole continent, as well as the first publication of Marx and Engels' Communist Manifesto. The conspiracy theories about cholera fastened onto a pre-existent social tension, just as did those about ufology over a century later.

The focus of the poor's discontent and fear over cholera

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became the medical profession. Measures intended to protect communities from cholera provoked riots in Russia and Hungary, where physicians, army officers, magistrates and nobles were killed. In Prussia, a rumour spread that physicians were being paid three silver thalers for every death from cholera among people under their care. Doctors were stoned in Paris, France. In India, cholera was said to be not a disease at all, but a campaign of poisoning rebellious subjects of British rule. In Britain itself it was believed doctors were using the disease as a cover to murder patients and sell their bodies for dissection in medical schools. As the epidemics re-treated, so did the conspiracy theories, if not the state of mind that produced them.

ALIENS AS DISEASE

Ebola and other hemorrhagic viruses have a later provenance according to Captain Joyce Riley, a former US Air Force flight nurse, but are nonetheless man-made. In a lecture in Houston, Texas, on 15 January 1996, she asked:

"Have you been seeing anything in the newspaper about Dengue fever in South America, or about these 'strange' viral hemorrhagic diseases that are 'suddenly attacking us' from 'nowhere'? Guess what. They came out of the Gulf War! And, they are now calling it 'emerging viruses'. Hemorrhagic fever viruses are among the most dangerous biological agents known. The Ebola virus. You didn't hear about that before the Gulf War, did you?"

Captain Riley blames hemorrhagic fevers and Gulf War Syndrome on an international cartel of drug companies who, she says, are deliberately wiping out the armed forces of the USA and those of other members of the Desert Storm coalition. She does not explain why anyone should regard this as a good idea. As presented on one Website, her essay is laced with comments by Val Valerian (a.k.a. John Grace, an associate of William Cooper and John Lear) a sample of which illustrates how far-reaching, as well as far-fetched, current paranoia about the US government has become, and the kind of company people like Captain Riley can find themselves. Says Valerian/Grace:

"The reason for the Gulf War, upon analysis, was threefold. It was to infect the U.S. military and subsequently the U.S. and world population, and secondly to reacquire Kuwait oil fields, which are owned by a well-known family in London [This is code for HM Queen Elizabeth II, in conspiracy-speak], and thirdly to test weaponry on Iraq, to whom factions sold weapons to be used against our own troops. . Do you understand, yet? Other reasons for securing the area involved control of vital earth grid points in Southern Iraq. Interestingly, there are also large underground facilities in the Middle East, some of them of rather ancient, and alien, origin, which still today contain high-tech equipment."

So here we have politics, the arms industry, the British monarchy, earth magic and mysticism, and aliens and UFOs (and their fabled underground bases) all bubbling together in one horrendous stew along with emergent viruses. As usual, no explanation is offered as to why whoever is supposedly behind these machinations wants or needs to infect "the world population". But the point of conspiracy theories is less to satisfy logic than to articulate and dramatise emotions - often ones, it would appear, that the purveyors of these convoluted schemes are unaware of enduring. [*7]

In a joint essay, [*8] Professors Dorothy Nelkin of New York University and Sander L. Gilman of Cornell University have pointed out that in this context "blaming" and conspiracy theories are "a means to make mysterious and devastating diseases comprehensible and therefore possibly controllable". (And so Dr Horowitz invokes the hope of redress by appealing to his readers to "make a difference by contacting their congressional representatives" to demand appropriate investigations.) Even when plagues were deemed to be the work of a wrathful God, the ultimate cause was believed to be human wickedness, which did lie within human power to control. "But diseases are never fully understood," say Nelkin and Gilman and, despite our medical science, "we still make moral judgements for misfortune. If responsibility can be fixed, perhaps something - discipline, prudence, isolation - can be done." When confronted by incurable, invisible

and potentially universal afflictions like AIDS, controllable". (And so Dr Horowitz invokes the hope of redress by appealing to his readers to "make a difference by contacting their congressional representatives" to demand appropriate investigations.) Even when plagues were deemed to be the work of a wrathful God, the ultimate cause was believed to be human wickedness, which did lie within human power to control. "But diseases are never fully understood," say Nelkin and Gilman and, despite our medical science, "we still make moral judgments for misfortune. If responsibility can be fixed, perhaps something - discipline, prudence, isolation - can be done." When confronted by incurable, invisible and potentially universal afflictions like AIDS,

"These are situations where medical science has failed to serve as a source of definitive understanding and control, so people try to create their own order and to reduce their own sense of vulnerability. In effect, placing blame defines the normal, establishes the boundaries of healthy behaviour and appropriate social relationships, and distinguishes the observer from the cause of fear."

As the antisemitic outbreaks during the Great Dying illustrate, this does not mean that the perceptions of what is "normal", "healthy" or "appropriate" are necessarily humane, urbane or morally defensible. Blame for disease is most often poured on those who are feared, powerful or, simply by being unconventional, are a threat to social cohesion. Fear of intrusive, over-mighty and uncontrollable "big government" and big business is clear enough in the outbursts of Dr Horowitz and Captain Riley, as it is in the rage of ufological conspiracists. It is hardly insignificant that Horowitz reserves his greatest venom for members of the Nixon administrations, whose betrayals of trust remain in the popular mind beyond all attempts at rehabilitation.

Sooner or later conspiracy theorists from ufology, the "patriot" movement and elsewhere were bound to conscript AIDS and emerging diseases to their cause. One can substitute the one word "science" for "medical science" in the passage quoted above and apply it to ufology without disturbing its truth. Scientists have largely

ignored UFOs, especially since their scepticism was endorsed by the Condon report, and so have governments. In the eyes of believers, this has been a betrayal; and so scientists and governments are demonized, made part of the psychodrama in which "the aliens", who seem so powerful, pose an uncontrollable and unfathomable threat to all that is ordered and peaceful - as if they were a kind of chronic, irremediable disease of the night skies. The aliens are also intrusive, according to the abduction scenario, coming upon you unawares, reading your mind and, like an incurable plague, able to defeat any protective measures you take against them.

The emergence of AIDS occurred at almost the same time as the popularity of abduction accounts and the birth of the latest rash of conspiracy theories in ufology. AIDS and its attendant mythologies, the abduction scenario, the New World Order and the machinations of Satan all strike at a sense of identity and the integrity and authenticity of the appearance of things. The matter of sexual identity - or more particularly, invisible and terrifying threats to it - are at the heart of the AIDS and abduction myths. UFO and political conspiracy theories address the void that opens when social identities are denatured by remote yet intrusive government, and both participation in and control of political life move out of individual reach. Both these aspects of identity are fundamental to a sense of meaningful existence, which has always been the domain of religion, the great defence against the nihilism implicit in mortality. Small wonder they have mingled and bred.

This essay has been developed from material taken from two books due for publication later in 1997: Future Plagues (Barnes & Noble, USA; Blandford, UK) by Peter Brookesmith, and UFOs and Ufology (Blandford, UK) by Paul Devereux and Peter Brookesmith

8 For the record I had better note that none of these claims bears much relation to scientific facts or history. The earliest identified AIDS cases date back to 1959, when the concept of genetic coding was unknown. Reverse transcriptase was discovered in 1970, and retroviruses were discovered in people in 1978. But it was not until 1983 that the technique of polymerase chain reaction, which revolutionised research into and manipulation of DNA, was invented. Essentially the cloning technology that the "invention" of HIV requires did not exist in 1977, let alone in 1969. After the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 the Soviet Academy of Sciences apologised for suggesting AIDS was a deliberate invention, a move it admitted had been inspired by the KGB. The US State Department had already concluded as much, and believed the accusations were designed to discredit the USA in developing countries. Of the hemorrhagic fevers, Bala fever first emerged in Zaire in 1976, Lassa fever in Nigeria in 1969, and Marburg fever in Germany (although it originated in Uganda) in 1967 - all well before the biotechnology existed to engineer them into existence, and vastly in advance of Operation Desert Storm. Facts have never stood in the way of a tasty conspiracy theory, however.

9 Dorothy Nelkin and Sander L. Gilman, "Placing the Blame for Devastating Disease", in Arien Mack (ed.), *In Time of Plague*, NY University Press 1991, pages 39-56.

This issue of *Magonia* deals largely with the impact of political conspiracy theory on the world of ufology. As Peter Rogerson notes, this is an area in which our late friend and colleague Roger Sandell was a leading researcher. To help keep alive his memory, and to try to support research in the fields in which he specialised, *Magonia* is to inaugurate an annual Roger Sandell Essay Competition to reward original writing which examines the broader social, political and cultural aspects of contemporary visions and beliefs.

The competition will be judged by leading authorities in the field, and we anticipate having a substantial cash prize for the winning essay. Further details will be announced in the next issue of *Magonia*, and posted on our Website shortly.

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**Peter Rogerson, 8 Braddon Avenue, Urmston
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DEEP SECRETS

Shortly before his untimely death our colleague Roger Sandell had planned to write a major article on the growing influence of conspiracy theories and fusion paranoia. If anything, since his death conspiracy theories have come in even further from their ancient home on the wilder shores of politics, into the cultural mainstream. They form the core of such cult television series as *The X-Files* and *Dark Skies*, to say nothing of the numerous commercial spin-offs. Recent issues of both Fortean Times and Big Issue, the magazine sold by the homeless, have features articles 'proving' that the Apollo moon landings were faked.

Peter Rogerson looks at some recent books that point to disturbing trends below this recent wave of interest.

While I am not in a position to write that major article, I am taking the opportunity of commenting on a series of books about conspiracy theories and related topics which have recently been published or reissued. Vankin's is a reissue with a new introduction, and comprises a general review of the topic. The compilation edited by Thomas consists of reprints from back issues of the conspiracy-oriented magazine *Steamshovel Press*. Lamy's and Parfrey's are analyses of the cultural and political milieu in which conspiracy theories flourish; Cohn's is a long-awaited reprint of his critique of one particularly malignant conspiracy theory, and the rest present individual theories.

Vankin's subtitle, 'From Dallas to Oklahoma', points to the American origin of most contemporary conspiracy theories. While there is a long tradition in American politics of what the historian Richard Hofstadter calls 'the paranoid style', it was the Kennedy assassination which in the mid-twentieth century brought conspiracy theories out from the fringes of the radical right. While some of these theories clearly involved 'realistic' notions of actions by small groups of political malcontents, many showed the classic hallmarks of Manichean conspiracy theories. A contributor to *Popular Alienation* sums

these up well: "The need at the root of all conspiracy questing is to find the root of human pain and suffering... which is held to flow out of some central fountain running in rivulets throughout the world. In most conspiracy theories evil is seen as a [metaphysical absolute, almost a substance] which can poison life through viral contamination".

I would summarise the essence of such Manichean theories as the belief that 'history as we know it is a lie' (as the opening titles to *Dark Skies* puts it), a delusion imposed upon us by a malevolent 'other'. The real history is very different: there is nothing random in history, all is controlled by 'them', and all the pain and suffering in the world is caused by the terrible others, who are the incarnation of cosmic evil. They are simultaneously subhuman and superhuman, pos-

sessed of preternatural powers and largely undefeatable. The conspiracy theorist is an illuminous, who can penetrate the maze of deception and see 'them' for what they are. The theorist is a soldier in the army of the righteous, filled with what Lamy calls millennial rage.

This line of thought can be seen in the writings of many who present the Kennedy assassination in essentially religious terms; as an American crucifixion, the slaying of the civic saviour by the incarnate forces of evil who have since usurped the land. The powers of the slayers is immense. They can fix all the evidence - the Zapruder film, the body, the autopsy reports - and wipe away all traces of their own guilt because they control everything.

Their identity varies according to time and place: witches, Christians, Moslems, Jews, com-

munist, capitalists, liberals, humanists, Catholics, Freemasons, homosexuals, scientists, child-abusers, illuminati, Grays, Nazis, multinationals. Sometimes they are protean creatures merging elements, and flowing into each other: Jewish-communist Freemasons, American bankers in the Vatican.

This protean nature extends to the conspiracies themselves. Kerry Thornley served with Lee Harvey Oswald in the Marines and wrote a novel in which the central character was based on Oswald before the assassination. He now claims that both he and Oswald were the products of a Nazi breeding experiment, and that he has been bugged by an implant since birth allowing strangers to know of his sexual experiences. Thus the Kennedy assassination merges with stories of mind control and abuse. Another veteran figure on the fringes of the assassination field, Mae Brussel, daughter of celebrity rabbi Edgar Maggin, shortly before her death in 1988, began to link the Kennedy assassination to an international Nazi-Satanist conspiracy associated with CIA mind control. This point of view is shared by an anonymous *Popular Alienation* contributor who alleged that the false memory hypothesis was being promoted by the CIA to hide their mind control experiments.

Mind control and child abuse form the central allegations of *TransFormation of America*, in which the former wife of a country music entertainer claims to have been sold into CIA slavery by her paedophile father, and been the sexual plaything of several US presidents, the mistress of a senator, and abused by several foreign leaders, whilst also acting as a CIA courier. This collection of allegations is known as *Project Monarch*, and no doubt we will be hearing more of it. Mind Control is fast becoming central to conspiracy theories, and Jim Keith mentions the rumours surrounding Timothy McVey. The point being emphasised here is that people do bad things because 'they' make them do it. This concept forms a sort of secular possession, with Nazi-Satanists and so forth replacing the devils and demons of former centuries.

There are other trends, and Vankin and *Popular Alienation* have them to meet all tastes. Vankin notes, for example, William Bramley, who has linked conspiracy theories with ancient astronaut speculation. There is the ubiquitous Lyndon La Rouché who lies at the heart of about half the conspiracy theories going and who has a particular fixation with the wicked British, who are the heirs to a conspiracy launched by a group of renegade Templars led by Robert the Bruce! Then there are the Collier brothers who believe that the press agency joint election reporting service in the USA just makes up the figures [Some Conservative politicians in Britain might start adopting this explanation as well! Ed.].

The volume of *Popular Alienation* I have reviewed is a reprint of the bulk of the contents of issues 4 to 11 of the journal *Steamshovel Press*, along with a selection of extra material. This magazine was originally started by people who saw themselves as part of the Beat Generation, disciples of Alan Ginsberg and William Burroughs. It is now a strangely eclectic conspiracy source and I can give no better description of its contents than by quoting from the rear blurb: "Abbie Hoffman's death seen as an assassination; the role of

President Nixon and George Bush in the death of JFK; Black Holes and the Trilateral Commission... Danny Casolaro and the INSLAW octopus; Mothman, Roswell, Area 51; Bill Clinton and Carol Quigley; the Gemstone File [which claimed that Aristotle Onassis was responsible for the JFK assassination, amongst other things]; anti-gravity; Ezra Pound; Holocaust revisionism; Bob Dylan and mind control..." Well, you get the picture. Some of this stuff is possibly true, some of it quite loopy, and quite a lot of it rather sinister.

Increasingly those conspiracy theories which used to have a more or less left-wing perspective have become dominated by the agendas of the groups associated with the American freelance militias, which in turn reflect the mixture of macho armed anarchism, anti-feminism and racism associated with the nineteenth century anarchist Proud-hon, with a dash of Christian fundamentalism thrown in.

The general theme of these theories is that the free people of the United States are about to be sold out to UN dominated slavery in the 'New World Order' (an infelicitous phrase used by George Bush, meant to refer to the *Pax Americana*, but given quite a new meaning by conspiracy theorists). Behind this plot is a mysterious conspiracy, usually referred to as the Illuminati. The original Illuminati were a small, pseudo-Masonic group set up in eighteenth-century Bavaria, dedicated to radical Enlightenment views; a sort of vague populism mixed with sexual liberation. They entered into American politics when they were used as a code word for the Federalist to attack Thomas Jefferson, and others thought to be too friendly towards the French Revolution. Today the term seems to be used as little more than a synonym for any sort of vague elite, or, more sinisterly, as a code word for Jews.

Jim Keith began his conspiratorial career promoting the *Gemstone Files*, but has now become a major spokesman for the militias. *Black Helicopters over America* is a remarkable example of political paranoia. It

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starts with UFO-like sightings of mysterious black helicopters which first entered the American consciousness in 1973 at the time of the cattle mutilations panic. They have since become a part of UFO lore, and feature as a mysterious, brooding, spying presence in the experiences of abductees like Debbie Jordan and Katarina Wilson. From the late 1980s the helicopters became politicised, as the carriers of the shock troops of the UN invasion; another old fantasy which began in the fevered imaginations of 1960s segregationists who assured their audiences that the UN troops would be Congolese. [For further discussion of the significance and power of the image of the helicopter, see 'The Curious Connection Between Helicopters and UFOs', by Dennis Stillings, in *Magonia* 25, March 1987]

Both Keith and Grant Jeffrey display one of the classic signs of paranoia: the inability to accept any kind of evidence which would contradict their views. Both see the UN as being dominated by the communists, rhetoric from the Red-baiting years which has surely been overtaken by events. Probably Cuba is the only country left in the world with a believing communist government, the Confucian regimes of China, Vietnam and Laos merely use communism as a nostalgic slogan. Keith and Jeffrey's answer to that is that the Reds have not been defeated, they are simply playing possum and just waiting to pounce. The death of devils is surely as hard as the death of gods. (Gordon Creighton's *Flying Saucer Review* promotes a similar theory in Britain.)

For Jeffery the 'Evil Empire' is not just a secular enemy, but the very domain of the Antichrist, and he has plenty of Biblical passages - all torn out of context - to prove his point. Like most apocalyptic Biblical interpreters he is unable to grasp the fact that Biblical writers were writing about the events and concerns of their own time, and not some inconceivably remote future. The apocalypticism typified by Grant Jeffrey, born from the imagination of Hal Lindsey and others of that ilk, crops up

everywhere. Near-death experience prophet Dannion Brinkley had visions of the Antichrist inaugurating the New World Order, although fundamentalist surgeon Maurice Rawlings sees the NDE itself as part of Satan's wily attempts to lure us into the New World Order.

This is the sort of atmosphere in which the militias and survivalist move. Philip Lamy describes their world view as 'Millennium Rage', the notion as summarised by Keith in *Black Helicopters...* and *OK Bomb*, that the evil Clinton is about to inaugurate the reign of terror, and all that stands against him are "Conservative pro-Constitutionalists, Christian religious fundamentalists, the second American militia movement..." etc. Lamy, in his important book, argues that these images appeal primarily to those whose lives have been upturned or threatened by social change.

The conspiracy theories are part of the apocalyptic tradition. They are the end signs, indicating that the enemy is on the verge of total victory and only the 'saving remnant' can stand against it. This siege mentality clearly links groups such as the Branch Davidians with the wider militia and radical right community. The survivalists studied by Lamy saw themselves as the remnant in the wilderness. There is an eagerness for a catastrophe which would cleanse the world: a great simplification, the kind of purification extolled in the disaster movies, in which the wicked are thrown down and the righteous exalted in some suburban apocalypse. Lamy places the contemporary apocalyptic tradition in the context of the millennialist currents in American history. This encompassed a range of historical precedents from the benign, meliorative visions of those who saw the American republic itself as a new beginning; the lore of the wilderness (surely a factor in survivalism); the millennialist movements of the Native Americans, such as the Ghost Dance; up to its reappearance in such forms as the Unabomber manifesto and the *X-Files*.

This brings us back to the visions which I reviewed in 'Blood, Vision and Brimstone' (*Magonia* 53, August 1995), and

testifies to the real social power of the rejected folk culture of the 'New Age', which, like the term New World Order, itself has clear millennialist overtones. Whether the likes of John Mack or Kenneth Ring might ever be the focus of a millennialist cult such as that of Herb Applewhite, we shall just have to wait and see.

The Oklahoma bomb was a product of this culture. Jim Keith in *OKBomb* reviews the rumours surrounding it. Much of the time he raises what seem like sensible points, but eventually falls into paranoid traps. For conspiracy theorists the notion of terrorists from their own tradition is unthinkable, and alternatives were suggested ranging from the claim of one militia leader that it was the work of the Japanese acting in revenge for the Tokyo subway gassing which itself was the work of the CIA. Others suggested it was a government act of provocation, a sort of modern Reichstag fire which could trigger the great UN crackdown; or our old friend mind control, as outlined by Mark Pilkington in *Magonia* 58. In passing, it has to be pointed out that while in some sense minds are being controlled all the time - by parents, schools, public authority, the media, etc. - there is no evidence of the sort of superhuman mind control as envisaged by conspiracy theorists ever having been, or possibly being, successful.

If I were to speculate on the motives of the Oklahoma bombers it would be to suggest a compound of propaganda by the deed, and an act of provocation with the intent of trying to provoke the authorities into some ill-judged overreaction and act of repression which would confirm their views and radicalise their followers.

The post-Oklahoma scene is also discussed in Adam Parfrey's collection of writings. Although not endorsing the militias, he concludes they have been made the subject of a great deal of hysteria, and that they are no match for the powers of the corporate state. Here he echoes the views of some commentators on Waco: with the old Red Empire gone the American state needs new enemies against which to define itself; whereas for many

groups of citizens the state itself has become the enemy.

The line between tragedy and farce is very fine, and one of the most surreal images in *Cult Rapture* must be the meeting between the survivalist, 'identity-Christian' (and what that means is the subject of a future review) and Presidential candidate for the far-right Populist Party, James 'Bob' Gritz (the model for Rambo), and a little old lady in tennis shoes who channels an alarming, nine-foot tall fascist reptilian called Harpoon. Rambo meets Reptilian. Strange days indeed!

Behind much of today's conspiracy theories lies the old Big Lie of antisemitism, symbolised by that notorious fraud, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. It is a sad thought that when Norman Cohn's masterful tracings of its origins, and the strange Russian rightists who manufactured it by plagiarising Joly's *Dialogues in Hell*, was first published thirty years ago, it was a dissection of a long dead literary corpse. This new edition must be seen more as a stake to be driven through the heart of a newly risen vampire, which I have seen on the shelves of the New Age section of Manchester's Waterstones', its nakedness hidden by the covers of *Behold a Pale Horse* or hiding in the poison pen of David Icke.

The necromancers who have disinterred this foul thing are behind many of today's conspiracy theories, using them as bait to trawl the youngsters who follow *The X-Files* and the like. Conspiracy theories throw a film of confusion over history, about which many people are not terribly informed anyway. If you can persuade people that Marilyn Monroe was murdered by the CIA, or if you can persuade them that the Apollo astronauts never really landed on the Moon, then perhaps you can persuade them that there was no Holocaust, and that maybe Adolph Hitler wasn't as bad as they say after all. By working their way into the fears and prejudices of people whose minds have already been prepared by a diet of conspiracy theories, these hate-mongers are likely to find a more rewarding way of spreading their ideas than trawling a few thuggish football fans. We must not let them.

Jonathan Vankin, *Conspiracies, Cover-up and Crimes from Dallas to Waco*. Illuminet Press, 1996. \$16.95.

Kenn Thomas (Ed.) *Popular Alienation; a Steamshovel Press Reader*. Illuminet Press, 1995. \$19.95.

Philip Lamy. *Millennium Rage; survivalists, white supremacists and the Doomsday prophecy*. Plenum Press, 1996. \$25.95.
Jim Keith. *OKBomb; conspiracy and coverup*. Illuminet Press, 1996. \$14.95.

Adam Parfrey. *Cult Rapture*. Feral House, 1995. \$14.95.

Norman Cohn. *Warrant for Genocide; the myth of the Jewish world conspiracy and the Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. Serif, new ed., 1996. £13.99.

Jim Keith. *Black Helicopters over America; strike force for the New World Order*. Illuminet Press, 1996. \$10.95.

Grant R. Jeffrey. *Prince of Darkness; Antichrist and the New World Order*. Bantam, 1995. £5.99.

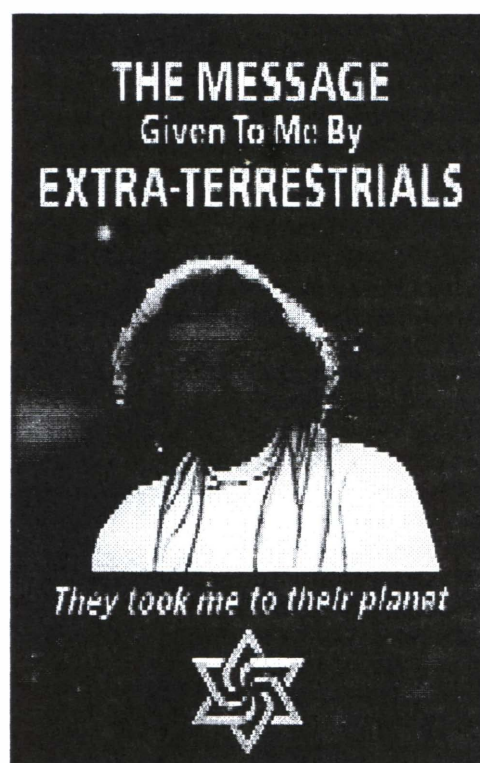
Cathy O'Brien and Mark Phillips. *TranceFormation of America*. Reality Marketing Inc., 1995. £12.95.



ON TRACK WITH BRITISH RAEI

Mark Pilkington reports:

It's not every day that you're given the chance to meet an extraterrestrial ambassador, but that's what the colourful British Raelian Foundation posters were offering early last April. The Rael Foundation was founded in 1973 by French motor-racing journalist Claude Vorlignon (now Rael) and claims to be the largest UFO organisation in the world, with 35,000 members in 85 countries. So it was with a reasonably open mind and a hopeful heart that myself and two friends made our way to the tacky Bayswater hotel lounge where this remarkable opportunity was due to take place. Things got strange as soon as I entered the toilets, where the pop superstar Prince was applying foundation to his cheeks whilst chatting to a female assistant. I soon established that this couldn't really be Prince because he's famously always surrounded by bodyguards. So I assumed that there must be a party going on in another part of the hotel; it was, after all, a Saturday afternoon. And I was right, but I didn't know that I too was going to be there.



The Raelians had picked a bad day for their first British meeting in about twenty years, it being less than a week since the Heaven's Gate suicides had hit the headlines, giving UFO fanatics everywhere a bad name. But this didn't stop the crowd packing its way into the small but glitzy function room. Small papier mache planets and flying saucers hung on wires from the low ceiling, bobbing around in the air conditioned breeze like Pleiadian beamships surfing on gravity waves. There were no comets. In the end people had to be turned away, and even a contingent

from The Nation of Islam had to stand stoically at the back of the room, looking, with their suits, shades and tiny red bow-ties, like a cross between CIA agents and Pee Wee Herman. The rest of the crowd was composed primarily of youthful continentals in bright anoraks and sweatshirts, the elderly and a few grubby, muttering UFO buffs, a couple of whom I recognised from a recent BUFORA meeting. The Raelians, however, stood out from the crowd, easy to spot as they all wore big gold or brass Rael medallions, and most of the men had chosen to look like Rael him-

self. Think Micheal Bolton crossed with Asterix the Gaul, and you'll be pretty close. Long, shoulder length hair, big moustaches, exposed hairy chests, cowboy boots and rhinestones seem to be de rigueur for the well dressed Raelian man, presumably thinking that if it works for Rael himself, it'll work for them.

Suddenly the lights dimmed and there was music, terrible insipid, tinny music. A woman bounced onto the stage, all teeth and dyed orange hair, and began to sing in a warbling French accent; "And lllll will always lof yuuuuu". Written by

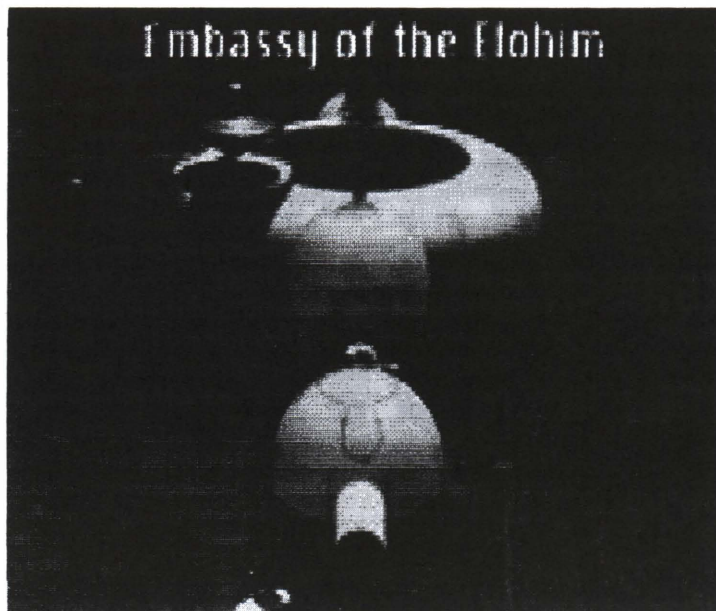
Dolly Parton, a number one hit for Whitney Houston about five years back. What in God's name was going on? Then I realised - they were chipping away at our defences, forcing us to let down our guard and open our minds to the warm seed of Rael. When it was over, I was applauding with the others.

"That was Sylvie ladies and gentlemen, already very big in Europe and soon to be big over here." Anthony Grey took to the stage, looking very much the respectable Englishman, dignified, even dashing in a John Pertwee sort of way. Instead of a

Rael medallion, he wore spectacles around his neck. "Rael is all about having more fun," he tells us, "and today we want to tell you the truth in simple terms." Unfortunately Rael himself wouldn't be there as he was lecturing in Australia; though the posters had given the impression that he would be. So instead it's Grey who's the ambassador for the extraterrestrials, and he explains the situation to us, as detailed in Claude Rael's *The Message Given to me by Extraterrestrials*, for sale from the beguiling young woman in the foyer.

A UFO is seen every 15 seconds, says Grey; 90% of these can be explained away in conventional terms - so far so good. The other 10% (exemplified by Arnold's sighting, Fatima and the Belgian Triangles) are flown by the Elohim, "they who came from the skies", as described in the Old Testament and every other world scripture - all versions of Rael's truth. The Elohim are hyper-intelligent human scientists. They created all life on earth, from the whale to the amoeba, 25,000 years ago through the advanced manipulation of genetic code. They now want to land on earth and for an open meeting with world leaders and the media. But we are not ready for them; all they can see of humanity is greed, despair and hatred. However, they will land if they are given a neutral place in which to do so, as close to Jerusalem as possible, for this is where they originally appeared and lived on Earth. It is the Raelians' mission to build them an embassy, an extraterrestrial leisure complex designed around a doughnut shaped crop circle glyph, complete with flying saucer style swimming pool. This has to be done by 2030, or mankind will destroy itself and we will be beyond the help of the Elohim.

Throughout all this Grey comes across as smart but slightly bumbling, perhaps so as not to intimidate the audience. I keep expecting him to crack a joke, to burst out laughing at what he has just said, but he doesn't, and neither does the audience. This is the real thing. As the meeting progresses we hear from Dr Brigitte Boisselier (PhD), a French scientist who soon tells us that she doesn't know



It is the Raelians' mission to build the Elohim an embassy, an extraterrestrial leisure complex designed around a doughnut shaped crop circle glyph, complete with flying saucer style swimming pool.

what day it is or who the current Prime Minister of France is. What she does know about is cloning and Rael's predictions for its future inhuman development. Ultimately, in the words of Brigitte; "What could stop us then to create new forms of life, or life with complete memory?"

Strangely, considering that she is his scientific consultant, she doesn't mention Rael's recent plan to set up Clonaid, a human cloning facility, where, for as little as \$200,000, you can produce cloned offspring of yourself. And for just \$50,000, you can take out Insuraclone, a service whereby cells from the living child can be preserved, so,

should anything go wrong, your little darling can be recreated from scratch. Presumably the proceeds from Rael books, videos, pendants, medallions, watches, T shirts and sweatshirts don't provide enough funds already. Then there's the imminent opening of UFO World in Canada, Rael's current home, where an exact UFO replica is being built from bales of straw. The press release states "As with everything else, we need to be the first on the market. This is why now is the ideal time to be part of this successful enterprise." Rael is clearly as much a businessman as he is a prophet.

Meanwhile, the presen-

tation is sinking further and further into absurdity - we learn that Jesus walked on the water with the help of an Elohim reverse gravity beam and that the Elohim parted the Red sea through similar technology. There's an awkward collision of cultures between the English, ministerial sincerity of Grey and the Eurovision tackiness of the Continental Raelians, who form the bulk of the group. We are subjected to more musical numbers; the Prince impersonator finally gets to strut and mime his stuff, and Claude from Switzerland sings "Don't Forget your dreams" accompanied by Sylvie and a dance troupe of heavily made up pre-teen girls in "Elohim for Peace" sweat shirts. The more funky of the assembled Raelians can't restrain themselves and begin to clap and dance in the shadows; some audience members tap their feet and nod in time. We're promised a Spice Girls impersonation from the young girls later on, a birthday treat for a high ranking Raelian, but it is definitely time to leave. We were told that there would be Raelian representatives to talk to in the foyer, but I couldn't see any and my two friends were keen to leave. I was intrigued, but disappointed not to have learnt very much about the group, though further follow up sessions were promised for those who were interested and had read Rael's book

Anthony Grey's incongruity amongst the rest of the group puzzled me. He told us that he was once a Reuters Middle East correspondent and had recently broadcast a BBC radio documentary, *UFOs: Fact, Fiction and Fantasy* (now available on cassette through the UK *UFO Magazine*). How did a man like Grey get involved with the bizarre Raelians? Did the BBC know of his affiliations when they hired him to make an impartial UFO programme?

Asking around over the next few days, I discovered that Grey had indeed been a well known and highly respected journalist. In July 1967 he was in Peking to cover the Cultural Revolution for Reuters and was captured by the Red Guard, who held him under house arrest until October 1969. On his release he wrote a best selling account of

his experiences, *Hostage in Peking*, published in 1970, and has since written a number of political thrillers. (1) Things were beginning to piece together. Two weeks later I was able to speak to Mr. Grey at the Fortean Times convention. Perhaps, you might think, unadvisedly, the Raelians had set up a stand there, hoping to attract some interest; and, from what I overheard whilst lingering around the stall, they were not unsuccessful.

After some initial suspicion that I knew his name, which was quelled when I mentioned that I was at the Raelian meeting, Grey was friendly and open about his past, and about Rael. Whilst a hostage, he told me, he had passed the time writing fiction and philosophy. One of the things he came to realise was that our universe has to exist within something else, as part of another greater body - Perhaps an expression of his own situation at the time? Trapped inside a cell but fully aware of the larger world outside - Then we jump to about five years ago. Grey was reading a lot of UFO material, including Rael's book, in which he stumbled across similar beliefs to his own. He was immediately fascinated, and eventually got to meet the man himself whilst putting together the BBC documentary. Grey was deeply impressed by Rael's sincerity and commitment to his beliefs, even in the face of the adversity and ridicule that he has encountered since he began his mission - The pressure was so great in his home land of France that Rael was forced to move to Canada - Grey believes strongly that Rael's encounters with the Elohim were physically real, and not visionary in nature, and that he is truly a prophet.

I asked Grey how he felt about accusations that Rael's teachings had a deeply fascistic undercurrent to them. This, he replied, was a result of the misinterpretation of his writings. "Sure, Rael talks about abolishing democracy. But you must agree that democracy just isn't working." I nod cautiously, not wanting to disrupt his train of thought. "What we propose is a geniocracy - rule by intelligence." He explains that all through their early lives, people would have their intelligence graded somehow. Then, at a cer-

tain age, provided they have acquired the designated level of intelligence, they will be given the right to vote. To actually stand for office would require an even higher intelligence level. Sounds like fascism to me, and that's without mentioning the planned creation of a robot (android? clone? human?) slave workforce and the aspirations to a genetically perfect human race.

Grey continues, telling me about his hopes to reorganise the group and give it some measure of credibility, which he agrees it currently lacks. He expresses concern about the planned cloning venture, fearing that getting involved in such a sensitive issue might work against them. I can't help wondering whether Grey has political inclinations, whether we might yet see a Raelian party standing at the elections in 2001. It's possible, even likely, that Anthony Grey might have suffered terribly at the hands of the Red Guard, well versed as they presumably were in techniques of psychological warfare and torture. We can never really know what it was like for him those two years, what scars he might still carry to this day. But that was thirty years ago, and it is only very recently that he has taken on the mantle of Rael. Whether he was attracted by the UFOs, the desire for power or simply the rumours of free love ("Sensual Meditation") that have always surrounded the group, Grey is very serious about his new role and the Rael's teachings.

There are still many questions that remain unanswered, not least amongst them the greater mystery of Rael himself. What, if anything, really happened to him that fateful day in 1973? For clues to that mystery we shall have to wait until October, when he'll be in the UK to promote the new translation of *The Message Given to me by Extraterrestrials*.

(1) Thanks to Martin Adamson for this information.

Further Information

<http://www.rael.org> Rael online
British Raelian Movement
BCM Minstrel, London,
WC1N 3XX

MAGONIA BACK ISSUES

Back Issues of *Magonia* are selling fast, and some are in very short supply. We have copies in stock of the following numbers, which are available at £1.50 each, including postage (overseas £2.00 or \$4.00). Highlights of each issue include

- 25 Strange helicopters linked with UFOs; Earthlights debate - Devereux, Evans, Campbell; Ufology and statistics.
- 26 Dismantling the Cracoe case; Witches, polts and BOLS; Magnetism and humans
- 27 The UFO experience as theatre; Mirage hypothesis; Unofficial history of the haunted house
- 28 Abductions special: Stillings on Hopkins, Stacy on Good, Rimmer on Streiber, and Cassirer on a forerunner of abductions
- 29 History of ley-hunting; Earthlights debate; Man from the Ministry spills the beans on MJ12
- 30 UK government files; UFOs on TV; Rogerson explores the fringes of ufology
- 31 Nightmares, sex and abductions; the Urban Legendary Elvis; Paul Fuller on mystery circles
- 32 Temporarily out of print
- 33 Pennine wierdness from David Clarke; Reason and superstition
- 34 Moore and Bennewitz; Bullard on American abductions
- 35 Kottmeyer looks at precursors of the abduction stories; Stillings analyses the American abduction myth
- 36 Spontaneous combustions; Abductions - who's being taken for a ride?; Delusions of witchcraft
- 37 Death of Ufology?; Bullard defends the American way; Dennis Stilling on the drama of fantasy
- 38 This is the important issue which first discussed Satanic abuse stories: articles by Roger Sandell, Mick Goss and Peter Rogerson.
- 39 Eyes from space, paranoid visions; Seeing things, UFO prototypes in fiction; Satanism update.
- 40 Flying saucers from Hell, abductions and Satanism; Eyes from space, part 2
- 41 John Harney on Roswell; Abduction variations; Eyes, part 3; Corn circle criticism
- 42 Hilary Evans challenges Bullard's view of abduction folklore; More on the Satanism panic
- 43 Victorian UFO crashes; the start of the Cat Flap.
- 44 Bullard responds to critics; Abductions and abortions; UFO hypochondria
- 45 UFO paranoia - the sixties revisited; The Linda Napolitano case; 'Secret Life'; Crashed saucers
- 46 Rogerson revises abduction history; Satanism panic; UFO paranoia part 3
- 47 Living laboratories; UMMO revisited; Fairyland's hunters.
- 48 Re-examining Mattoon - was the phantom real?; Virtual banality; Did the USAF encourage belief in flying saucers?
- 49 In search of real UFOs; Sex, science and salvation; Alienating fantasies
- 50 Alienating fantasies part 2; Brookesmith slams sloppy research; Rogerson recovers 'lost' abductions
- 51 Still seeking Satan; Urban legends - trams and cats
- 52 Godships; Abduction absurdities; Investigation standards controversy
- 53 Temporarily out of print
- 54 Communion cups and crashed saucers, ufology as a religion, first part of a major series; New explanation for the Gill case from Martin Kottmeyer; Abduction update
- 55 Critical look at how researchers are treating child 'abductees'; Strange suicide legends
- 56 Organ-snatching rumours dissected; Part 2 of 'Communion cups...'; Remembering Roger Sandell
- 57 Origins of the ancient astronaut myth; More on the Gill case; Abduction update
- 58 Mind control stories; Varghina and other crash retrievals; Poltergeist machine and other strange devices

Order from the address on Page Two. Cheques etc. payable to "John Rimmer". US customers, please pay in dollar bills. French notes accepted at £1.00 = FF10.00

We have an on-going programme of reprinting out-of-print issues. Check our regular back-number update in *Magonia* magazine and on our web-site.

25 YEARS AGO

Ufology was going through a thin patch in 1972, and this was reflected in the thin issues of *Mersey-side UFO Bulletin* which were published at the time. A curious, undated issue, which came out at some point between the Spring and Summer numbers consisted of just four pages and one article. This was a piece by Peter Rogerson suggesting future directions for UFO research. If only some of these had been attained the subject may have made more progress in the intervening twenty-five years: "There should be an effort made to conduct sociological and psychological study of modern UFO cults, such as that at Warmminster". Feasible then, but no-one took up the challenge; impossible now.

"The national organisations should cease to act as bodies with corporate opinions, planning research, etc., and become documentation centres, co-ordinating research, holding central catalogues and files and library facilities..." I hear the same thing being said now by Bob Rickard and Jenny Randles, amongst others. You'll forgive me if after 25 years and experience of at least one spectacularly unsuccessful attempt, I allow a little cynicism to cloud my view

Some other of Peter's proposals, although absolutely essential and as relevant now as ever, just seem hopelessly naive: "Take steps to counter the damage caused by the activities of certain sensationalists, particularly the gentlemen whose lunacies provide much sport for the popular press." If only!

One suggestion did progress however, but only because it was Peter himself who took it in hand: "There should be a major effort to document and re-investigate all Type I reports in both published and unpublished sources... Every effort should be made to determine the date and geographical location of each report. Regular catalogues should be published..." As a one-man-band Peter was unable to reinvestigate cases, but he began the mammoth *INTCAT* catalogue of Type I cases which was to become a regular feature of *MUFOB* for a number of years, and inspired other cataloguing efforts such as *UFOCAT* in the USA.

Tucked away at the back of this mini-MUFOB was a brief review of the book *Legends of the Sons of God* by T. G. Lethbridge, notable for being the first contribution to *MUFOB* by our greatly missed friend and colleague, Roger Sandell. The first in a long series which have added immeasurably to our knowledge and understanding of ufology and all the other topics we have covered in this magazine.

The Summer 1972 issue was a little more substantial than its predecessor, with another article by Peter Rogerson: this a pioneering piece on the mythic component in UFO events. To follow, John Harney contributed a call for a rational look at UFO reports, and demonstrated the failings of what was, until then, typical of UFO investigations. He compared UFO investigation to game playing, in which each approach to the subject has its own rules, players, and spectators. JR

Magonia readers in London, and visitors, are welcome to come along to the monthly *Magonia* Readers' Group meetings. These are held on the first Sunday of each month at the Railway pub, Putney. This is situated just across the road from Putney SWT station (about 10 - 15 minutes from Waterloo) on the corner of Putney High Street and Upper Richmond Road.

We meet from about 7.15 p.m. onwards, just an informal group chatting about anything to do with the topics we discuss in *Magonia*. Just look out for the table with copies of the magazine and other weird titles scattered about! If you want further details ring us on 0181 876 7246 before setting out.

The Railway is a Wetherspoon's pub, so there's a music-free atmosphere with a good range of food and drink at reasonable prices.

LETTERS

Dear Mr Rimmer,
Thanks once again for another excellent *Magonia*. I was particularly interested in your review of David Morehouse's *Psychic Warrior*, published by Michael Joseph. I'd like to add my tuppenceworth, if I may. The first point is that it seems to be an attempt by Morehouse to clear himself of the allegations of adultery, theft of military property and "conduct unbecoming to an officer" recounted both in his own book, and in Schnabel's *Remote Viewers*, recently reviewed in *Fortean Times*. Strangely he omits the allegation of sodomy included in Schnabel's work. He does this by alleging that the charges are trumped up because of his idealistic decision to reveal the great benefits of remote viewing to the world while warning of the dangers of remote influencing. He also suggests that the CIA's decision to go public about remote viewing is part of a CIA disinformation campaign and that most of the people claiming to be remote viewers are imposters. He claims that only the people he names were those actually working on the project. In this instance it seems strange that he mentions Ed Dames, one of the more famous officers involved in his *Author's Note*, while omitting him from the rest of the book. Of course, it could well be that Dames is one of the people whose identities are disguised, but in that case why blow his cover by naming him at the very start of the book? And that's just only one of the problems the book throws up.

The other major point is Morehouse's description of the Lockerbee (sic) bombing. He claims there was a second bomber, an Iranian woman whose husband had been on the airliner destroyed by the US Air Force. Private Eye has alleged that the Lockerbie bomber was a Syrian, but Bush conveniently chose Libya as the scapegoat because he wanted Syria's support against Iraq in the Gulf War. This accusation has more than a little merit. Morehouse avoids the main question of responsibility for the bombing and so appears to me to go along with his superiors in fingering Libya. The inclusion of the Iranian woman seems to be an attempt to keep western atti-

tudes form against them, especially as Europe still continues to trade with them. This bit of the book left me wondering whether Morehouse's own oeuvre was a bit of disinformation for the intelligence services in its turn, or whether Morehouse just didn't know but included the Iranians to make a convincing story.

As for the description of other planets - it all read like bad science fiction. Humanoid aliens in Egyptian-style robes seem to belong more to the world of H.P. Lovecraft or Lord Dunsany than to an accurate description of other-worldly beings. Similarly, far from the atmosphere on Mars being choking, it's so low as to constitute a laboratory vacuum. But I expect you knew that anyway.

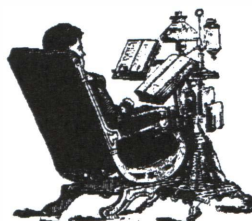
Similarly his description of shooting through a tunnel to the target destination reminded me of nothing so much, apart from similar experiences in the NDE, as Dr Who's Time Vortex, the Time Tunnel from the series of the same name, and the effects from a video game for the ZX Spectrum, *Stargate*. That one was rather good, as I recall. It's possible to list the parallels further, but I'd only bore you. It also reminded me of what some of those who practise out-of-body exercises call "skying", which is when the mystic finds himself soaring up into the heavens. In a way, the book is quite a folkloric artefact, as some of the material seems based on genuine psychic experiences, though whether these experiences have any objective reality remains moot.

I can also see some of the more paranoid, ufological true believers making comparisons between "Jim Marrs", the journalist in Morehouse's book, and Jim Schnabel. Or seeing Schnabel's book as more CIA propaganda. Schnabel is supposed to have friends in the Agency and UFO Reality even named him as one of the Avians, with the possible codename of Mockingbird.

Given this, and the dubious nature of the book as a whole, I can see it plaguing ufology and the world of conspiracies for years to come.

Yours faithfully,
David Sivier, Bristol

BOOK REVIEWS



O John and Anne Spencer, *The Poltergeist Phenomenon: an investigation into psychic disturbance*. Headline, 1996. £19.99.

O Philip Stander and Paul Schmolling, *Poltergeists and the Paranormal; fact beyond fiction*. Llewellyn, 1996. £10.99

Two new books on poltergeists from either side of the Atlantic. Both review historical and contemporary cases, including those investigated by the authors. The Spencers will be well known to *Magonia* readers, being stalwarts of BUFORA and ASSAP. The American authors are college professors, and teach at a Community College in New York, and I assume their book is a sort of textbook. The Spencers provide a wider range of cases, while Stander and Schmolling (S&S) give rather more detail on individual cases. One which is of some interest features a lady called Margot who, among other anomalous experiences, had the experience of being orally raped by an incubus. S&S do not appear to realise that her account was a classic description of The Hag, and it is instructive in cases like these to try to work out what environmental and physiological stimuli provided the building blocks of the hypnagogic narrative.

Both pairs of authors allude to the Hydesville rapping in

more or less similar terms, and do not appear to take Katie Fox's alleged confession at face value. S&S also have sections on Eusapio Palladino and Daniel Home; the account of the latter deriving from the uncritical biography by Elizabeth Jenkins, itself based on books by Home and his wife.

S&S do at least give some space to the sceptical positions, and seem to appreciate to the sorts of complexities surrounding these stories, whereas the Spencers take a completely uncritical stance which, given the insightful comments John Spencer has made about abduction cases, seems surprisingly obtuse at times. In some cases they seem to be wilfully withholding information, the existence of which they can hardly be unaware. For example they quote the claims of Grosse and Playfair about the Enfield poltergeist without mentioning the very severe criticism made by Anita Gregory of the SPR - a respected and anything but dyed-in-the-wool sceptical researcher (see her review in the *SPR Journal* for December 1980). No mention is made of Hall and Dingwall's sceptical commentary of the Runcorn poltergeist; a mention of the case of Mrs Forbes does not give the full context of her story, with its faked apports and her claim to have been attacked by a vampire, even though they are in the source (Fodor) that

the Spencers refer to. Most seriously, in an uncritical account of the SORRAT affair no mention is made of the fact that many far from generally sceptical parapsychologists - the late Scott Rogo, for instance - were convinced it was a hoax.

Both books, like a lot of paranormalist writings, tend to rely on unexamined clichés. Neither provide any conceivable mechanism by which the human brain can move objects at a distance; terms like sexual energy are used without defining what exactly is meant by this. I suspect it is a metaphor, and one could no more lift a table by sexual energy than ride to work on the back of a fast-paced thriller. Even if this is not the case, no-one comes up with the mechanism by which increased levels of testosterone or oestrogen could move objects at a distance. When we come to cases like the one discussed by the Spencers, in which a poltergeist was accused of, among many other things, leaving teeth marks in food in a fridge and filling in crossword puzzles, invoking paranormal mechanisms seems totally absurd.

Reading these cases, it struck me more and more that trickery is the *only* explanation which makes sense. We can argue whether or not the trickery is always conscious or not, whether it sometimes takes place in dissociated states, even whether, when

normal means of trickery are ruled out, some paranormal trickery takes place. But these are probably not very clear-cut distinctions, and in the latter case may never be resolvable. The interesting question, which these books don't answer, are those concerning the meaning and purpose of poltergeists. The Spencers do suggest that frustration and stress play a part; yet this cannot be the whole background, as poltergeists are not common in a variety of stressful situations ranging from traffic jams to prisons.

They provide a more important clue when they point out that they rarely happen to people living alone. They are not directed outwards to the wider community. People don't produce poltergeist effects to interest the neighbours: they are the product of the tensions of small groups such as families and workplaces. There are clearly deep connections with Munchhausen's Syndrome, as the case of Beverly Allitt (and I believe, Mrs Forbes, Marianne Foyster and Eleanor Zugun) demonstrates. There appears to be some relationship to vandalism (a form of social behaviour which reappears generation after generation). There may also be connections with eating disorders.

The most likely common purpose is the gaining of attention from, and power over, other

people; more specifically a rearranging of the power relationships within a group. Relatively powerless and insignificant members can now be the centre of attention: they are able to manipulate those around them, often in a violent and disturbing manner, and can instil fear in others - and get away with it.

Of course, by no means all these events are caused by just one person. Others may get in on the act as ever more complex games get played out. The Spensers in particular tend to feel that this sort of speculation involves blaming the victim. But it would be naive to divide the world into polarised camps of blameless victims and blameworthy perpetrators. Real life is much, much more complicated than that. **PR**

Richard Hayman. *Riddles in Stone; myths, archaeology and the ancient Britons.* Hambledon Press. £25.00

This very nicely produced book is a study of changing interpretations of Britain's megalithic monuments from folklore to the radiocarbon revolution. It is of interest to both professional archaeologists and to the lay public. I think the sections most likely to interest *Magonia* readers are chapters 18 to 24 which deal with some of the theories of Sir Norman Lockyer, Gerald Hawkins and Alexander Thom, and the ley-hunters from Alfred Watkins onwards. Hayman, who admits that he entered archaeology via ley-hunting, deals with these topics in a critical but sympathetic manner.

Like many more mainstream theories, such ideas appeal to their times: Hawkins

astroarchaeology, worked out on an old-fashioned giant computer was a product of the years of the 'white heat of the technological revolution', whilst ley-hunting derived from the counterculture of the late 1960s and 1970s.

Hayman points out that, far from being a solitary prophet, Alfred Watkins was in many ways a typical product of the English county archaeological society milieu. Theories about alignments had been around since the coming of the Ordnance Survey maps. In particular Hippiusley Cox's *Green Roads of England*, published in 1914, could be seen as a predecessor. Watkins was an old-fashioned figure, an antiquary rather than an archaeologist, and was heavily influenced by his Herefordshire background, where there were few megaliths and no stone circles.

New Age interpretations of leys probably began with Alfred Lawton's *Mysteries of Ancient Man* (1939) in which he introduced the idea that leys were connected with some kind of terrestrial current. Other writers, such as Miss Olive Pixley (whom Hayman describes as being "a large bustling woman dressed in uncompromising tweeds") also added mystical footnotes.

Hayman notes briefly the role of Aime Michel and Duncan Wedd (but omits Philip Heselt) in the revival of ley-hunting. John Michell gets a chapter to himself, largely based on *View over Atlantis*. Also treated in some detail are Paul Screeton, the Bords and Paul Deveraux, and Hayman notes the latter's move away from energy grid theories into more mainstream activities.

Overall, Hayman con-

cludes that such fringe ideas evoked an Arcadian image of the past far removed from the evidence encountered by archaeologist, which is then coupled with a romanticised town-dweller's view of the countryside. **PR**

Raymond E Fowler. *The Watchers II; exploring UFOs and near-death experience.* Wild Flower Press, 1995. \$12.00.

Raymond Fowler has come a long way indeed since he was the archetypal nuts and bolts ufologist of *UFOs; interplanetary visitors* some twenty years ago. He is now clearly inside the paranormalist, post secularist camp along with Vallee, Streiber - who provides an introduction to this book - and Mack, and takes Hopkins and Jacobs to task for ignoring the paranormal aspects of many of their stories.

This book continues the saga of Bob and Betty Andreasson-Luca, with some of Bob's regressions, and more of Betty's. Religious themes predominate, with Betty's encounters with the Gray Watchers and the humanoid Elders. It comes as no surprise to me that Betty did indeed know of the origins of the term 'Watchers' in the apocryphal literature surrounding the Bible. Her reading appears to be much wider and more eclectic than that of the average American fundamentalist. In my reviews of Fowler's *The Watchers* I predicted that this would be revealed in the sequel.

As the theme of *The Watchers* also appeared in the little-known sequels to the John and Sue Day story ('The Aveley Abduction') as published in Andy

Collins's magazine *The Supernaturalist*, I had wondered what the common origin might have been. Fowler provides an unexpected answer: a paperback by none other than Lobsang Rampa, aka Cyril Hoskins. In fact Fowler lists a raft of possible sources for Betty's imagery, although he sees them as parallels, rather than what is obvious to the more sceptical reader: that they are sources drawn on either consciously or unconsciously. This does not mean that these sources, ranging from the Bible, through New Age literature to popular culture and film, have not been reworked with some originality.

In the part two of the book Fowler draws parallels between Bob and Betty's experiences and other abductees as recorded in Eddy Bullard's catalogue, as well as with NDEs as reported in the works of Morse, Sabom and Ring. Fowler concludes that the 'other' hails from the realms of spirit and includes the spirits of the dead (folklore motif: the dead among the fairies).

Where do we go from her? The narrative is not without millenarian potential; nor is it beyond the realms of possibility that Betty might discover - to her considerable embarrassment of course - that she is 'the woman clothed with the Sun' as mentioned in the Book of Revelations. The Gnostic millenarianism of Kenneth Ring and John Mack, which I noted in 'Blood, Vision and Brimstone' (*Magonia* 53, August 1995) clearly forms the background, and I wonder just how dissimilar all this was to the message of Herb Applewhite. **PR**

Curiously, the von Däniken style of "scholarship" does not appeal to most experts on ancient religious texts, be they religious or not. They just do not seem to see how such writings can be seen as unreliable and nonsensical except for the parts which, in the judgement of the learned von Däniken, constitute evidence of visits by ETs and their interference in human affairs.

Von Däniken is now a believer in alien abductions. This is because there are so many reports, and because Dr John Mack (that fellow has a lot to answer for) says that there is no psychological explanation for them. Apparently, as we are hybrids between humans and the ETs who visited us in ancient times: "Our genetic material therefore already contains extraterrestrial portions. The little grey aliens know this. All that they have to do is awaken the "junk" by making it compatible with the rest of our DNA chains, so that the halfempty brain is flooded with information."

If you want your half empty brain flooded with garbage, then buy this book. **JH**

Erich von Däniken. *The Return of the Gods: Evidence of Extraterrestrial Visitations.* Element Books, Shaftesbury, Dorset, 1997. £14.99

It is apparently quite easy to prove that the Earth was visited by extraterrestrials (ETs) in ancient times. Just study the Bible and other religious writings and pick out the passages which might suggest, if taken literally, accounts of flying machines or strange people using advanced technology. To do this it is first necessary to rubbish religion in general, so that the actions of God, or the gods, can be attributed to the ETs instead.

One way of disposing of all the awkward religious bits is to point out that the Gospels, for example, were not written down until long after the events they described, and that they were then copied by scribes who introduced many alterations and errors. So we shouldn't take them too seriously. However, this kind of interpretation apparently does not apply to stories of flying chariots and the like. And it has to be realised that angels and other mysterious beings are really space people.

Robert A. Baker. Hidden Memories: Voices and Visions from Within, Prometheus Books, New York, 1996. £14.99

As this book is published by Prometheus many readers will guess correctly that it is written by a dedicated sceptic. There are the usual constant reminders to us as to what we should or should not believe, but those who are not too irritated by the preachy (anti-preachy?) tone will find this a useful guide to the psychology behind alleged psychic experiences, UFO abductions and the like.

The discussions on hypnosis, cryptomnesia, confabulation, delusions and hallucinations are particularly valuable to anyone who is serious about attempting to evaluate fantastic tales presented as fact.

UFO abduction stories have never caused as much trouble as child-abuse stories.

This is undoubtedly because stories of child sexual abuse are much more plausible, and child abuse undoubtedly does happen. Baker vividly illustrates how false accusations can create havoc. He cites the case of Judy Johnson, of Manhattan Beach, California, who in August 1983 complained to police that her son had been molested by a man called Mr Ray at the McMartin Preschool over a three-month period, even though the boy had attended this man's class on only two afternoons. Despite the fact that her complaints against him became more and more bizarre and that she went on to make similar accusations against her estranged husband and three healthclub employees, the people named by her were charged with various offences. The case finally collapsed after Mrs Johnson was hospitalised and diagnosed as an acute paranoid schizophrenic. In 1986 she died of an alcohol related liver

disease. Such false accusations and the hysteria generated by credulous reactions to them not only cause deep distress to many innocent people, but make it more difficult to bring to light real cases of child abuse.

With regard to UFO abduction stories, Baker claims that "...it is clearly evident that a very large proportion of the abduction stories are due to the suggestive influence of the therapist." He goes on to say that "If the therapist is a well trained, experienced professional...most abduction claims would not surface." This book is a reprint, so it was obviously written before Dr John Mack appeared on the UFO abduction scene. We now know that even professionals are not immune from such nonsense, so the situation would appear to be even worse than Baker had supposed. In this context the following passage is well worth quoting:

"The problem is that there are hundreds of undiagnosed schizophrenics who are able to function quite normally most of the time. They can hold a job, take care of their personal needs, interact effectively with people around them, and appear, superficially, to be perfectly normal. They do, however, show one little abnormality which gives them away if they finally do come to the attention of a trained and qualified therapist."

Now if this abnormality in some cases happens to be a belief in alien abductions, then this would explain a lot; Hopkins, Mack, Jacobs, Sprinkle, etc. are schizophrenics. This is all very well, but we all have our peculiarities and personal idiosyncrasies.

We can't all be mad, can we? Anyway, read this book and perform your own diagnosis. **JH**

Terry Le Riche Walters. Who on Earth am I? Psychic, Alien and Paranormal Experiences, Amora, Ringwood, Hants, 1997. £7.99

There are many people who claim psychic powers, and many of them are also insufferably pompous and pretentious. Not so Terry Walters. He tells his story in such an artless, straightforward manner that one immediately warms to him, despite the fantastic nature of his claims.

It seems that when he encounters sick people they are either quickly cured, or at least feel much better. He is also a dab hand at exorcising troublesome spirits and psychically receiving messages in time to warn people of unforeseen dangers.

Most Christians who gain reputations for having healing abilities attribute them to the power of the Holy Ghost, but Terry, not being a religious man, attributes them to his friends, the "Orions", so called because they hail from the general direction of Orion.

The Orions would be instantly recognised by most ufologists as the type known as Nordics. Terry has travelled with the Orions in their craft. Early one morning the Orions revealed their presence and invited him to join them on a journey. Terry did this without leaving his bedroom, as he travelled telepathically. His friends steered their craft eastwards and they sped across Asia, landing

at Yakutsk to take soil samples. While this voyage was taking place Terry gave his wife a running commentary on what was happening..

Apparently "...some Orions are living on Earth as family units". This is not without its hazards, as Terry has good reasons to believe that three of them are being held prisoners at an RAF station in Bedfordshire.

Like all such people, Terry has occasional problems with the sceptics. On one occasion when he appeared on a TV show in Norwich, he had to put up with two pairs of these creatures. One pair was very rude to him and his wife in the taxi on the way to the studio. The other pair consisted of a man and his wife. The woman had heavy make up because she suffered from skin complaints. However, she said that during the TV programme she could not help staring at Terry and she had then felt a "presence" leave him and go into her. As a result her skin troubles were quickly cured. It is not recorded what the rude pair of sceptics thought of this.

Whether you believe every word of Terry's stories or dismiss them as nonsense, you will find them a breath of fresh air compared to the disgusting gunge extruded by the American alien abduction crowd. Terry has never met any Greys and doesn't want to, so just read and enjoy. **JH**



Janet Bord. Fairies - Real Encounters with Little People. Michael O'Mara, £15.99. 1997

It must be hard being a fairy. No one takes you seriously anymore, and thanks to a couple of cruel little Victorian girls, you're forever destined to look like winged prancing ninnies. But all this should change thanks to Janet Bord's slender new tome, which portrays the little people in rather a more sinister light. Anyone stumbling across frolicking fairies on a dark night would be best advised to leave them alone it seems, and if contact has been established, just do whatever they say and don't ask too many questions.

The book chronicles fairy encounters of all sorts from the 17th century to the near-present day, and demonstrates that they're seen all over the world, in almost as many shapes and sizes as our alien friends. The similarity between little people from inner and outer space is given a whole chapter here, and there are some fascinating details to be found, including one elf with Grey-like big black eyes and another with a smoke machine attached to its chest.

Notable omissions include Terrence McKenna's 'dancing machine elves' that he and others have met in DMT induced 'hyper-space' and the peculiar gnomish character that Whitley Strieber claims lived with him for a while in his book Breakthrough. I was also reminded of the reports from New York and other cities of mysterious break-ins where the intruders seem only to have tidied up or redecorated. The text is a little dry in places, and Bord draws no new conclusions to set you reeling; but the book is well illustrated and contains a handy guide to UK fairy sites to make up for these niggles. **MP**

Hilary Evans and Dennis Stacy (Eds.) *UFOs 1947 - 1997*. John Brown, 1997. £16.99

Fortean Times's contribution to ufology's 50th birthday is this collection of essays from ufologists around the world. The international scope is welcome, with many contributions from outside the familiar US-UK ufological axis. Many of the essays have a constructively sceptical tone: Eric Maillot's analysis of the Trans-en-Provence case goes back to basics and reveals the legend which has been built around a simple misidentification and a joking remark. It reveals also the naiveté of quasi-governmental organisations when they become involved in areas outside their expertise. It would seem that most 'government conspiracies' are a case of covering backs rather than covering evidence.

Not all contributions are hard-headed demolitions of classic cases, but serve to give a good review of the development of ufology over the past fifty years. Personal reminiscences of the early days of ufology in America from Jim Mosely, and Marc Hallett's insider's account of Adamski's followers in Europe are valuable reminders of an almost forgotten era.

The real value of this collection is that each contributor writes from personal experience about an aspect of ufology that he or she has dealt with directly, and this gives an immediacy to each essay. My only criticism is with the format and price: a hardback with just a few black-and-white illustrations retailing at £17.00 is not going to get the mass market it deserves. A large-format paperback would have been a better idea. **JR**

Steve Moore (Ed.) *Fortean Studies, volume 3*. John Brown, 1996. £19.99

Another compilation from FT bringing together longer, more densely documented articles than can fit in the monthly magazine. Mike Dash's study of the Victorian 'Spring Heeled Jack' panic is not only an exemplary documentation of a phenomenon tracing it through original sources, but also a clear demonstration of how rumours and panics are generated which is just as relevant to modern cases. The bizarre episode of the Singing Mouse of De-

Kendrick Frazier, Barry Karr and Joe Nickell. *The UFO Invasion*. Prometheus Books, 1997. £21.00

Reprints of 39 UFO related articles from *Skeptical Enquirer* taken from the decade 1986 to 1996, along with one specially written article by Robert Baker on sleep paralysis. Authors include Robert Scheaffer and Phil Klass, and topics include an effective demolition of the Roswell affair, crop circles, MJ12, CETI, and some more general papers. As expected in an anthology of this sort the quality is variable, and some of the contributions will strike those of us who have been around for a while, as a bit old hat, but worth it for the Roswell material, and Baker's pieces on sleep paralysis and false memory. **PR**

vonport, chronicled by Jonathan Downes reveals the role of the contemporary press and radio in promoting and even creating Fortean events, something which is developed in Neil Nixon's analysis of the role of the media in the continuing mutations of the UFO legend. Michel Meurger's investigation of cultural predecessors of the alien abduction scenario provides more ammunition for 'psycho-social' ufologists, who have been having a bit of a hard time of it lately. Although cryptozoology leaves me personally rather cold, for those who like that kind of thing there are pieces on sea-serpents and mysterious giant birds. Magonia Mick Goss details stories of devilish intervention on building projects. In all, *Fortean Studies 3* continues the high standards set by previous volumes. **JR**

Jenny Randles. *Alien Contact: the first 50 years*. Collins and Brown, 1997. £14.00

Jenny must be writing so many books now that she is having to recycle titles: *Alien Contact* was the title of the book she wrote about the Welsh family (by analogy with the Scottish Play) back in 1981. That book made an original contribution to the subject, which is more than can be said for this one, a pointless and cynical scissors and paste exploitation piece with an emphasis on crashes and abductions presented with transatlantic credulity. I wouldn't mind this if I thought Jenny actually believed this stuff, but when the mood takes her she can be as sceptical as any Magonian (compare her brave stance in debunking the Manchester Airport 'near-miss' case in the face of considerable hostility

from other ufologists, Ed.). She really must know that much of what she writes here is total rubbish. If that sounds harsh imagine what she herself might say if another researcher had quite gratuitously hinted that the Aberfan disaster was caused by a UFO.

The only original thing in this book is Jenny's claim to have encountered three 'wise-baby' cases before the appearance of Hopkins's Intruders. The only example she gives is a woman who some months after a nondescript UFO sighting, became pregnant and had a dream that she was going to give birth to a devil baby with supernatural intelligence, and later had a miscarriage. Not very similar to Hopkins, and not perhaps untypical of anxiety dreams associated with pregnancy. There is no doubt that the theme of hybrid babies predates Hopkins. I wrote an article on the idea in the August 1985 number of *Magonia*, part of which reworked material I had used in the early 1970s. Both Brad Steiger and Graham Phillips had popularised the idea of 'Star Children' in the same era, and women's magazines and tabloids featured 'are you a star-child?' quizzes. Of course, this theme can be traced back to John Wyndham's *The Midwich Cuckoos*, and the wise baby motif features in the Brandon Family stories by Peter Tinniswood, popular in the 1970s. **PR**

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Graham Harvey *Listening People, Speaking Earth; contemporary paganism*. C. Hurst & Co., 1997.

Academics seem unsure what to make of the recent upsurge in Paganism, perhaps dismissing it as infantilism, or arguing that it is impossible to be a Pagan nowadays. Graham Harvey is a lecturer in Religious Studies who is a Pagan himself, and enthusiastically crams his book with information. He runs through the main different trends - druidry, Wicca, Norse Heathenism, Goddess spirituality, ceremonial magic and shamanism - together with rites of passage and season, ecological awareness and earth mysteries. Pagans themselves will probably be familiar with much of it. It ought to be a useful guide for outsiders, except that Harvey makes it all sound a bit more solemn than it is, and that as he himself points out Paganism is a religion that one experiences rather than believes, so that an account of Pagan beliefs is ultimately valueless. **GJM**

Cassandra Eason *Miracles: a collection of true stories which prove that miracles do happen* Piatkus, 1997. £8.99

Successful prayer, inexplicable healing, narrow escapes from death, divinely dictated music, visions of the Virgin - they're all here, and much more. Needless to say, there is very little sceptical analysis: the owner of a weeping statue admits that 'experts' accuse her of fraud, but asks, "why do I need to prove anything?" However the book is refreshingly ecumenical: in contrast to those which only describe miracles which happen to members of one faith (with the intention that the reader should join them) Eason includes everyone from Evangelicals to people whose lives have been saved by the miraculous appearance of Sai Baba. Some types of miracle, one gathers, are peculiar to certain religions. Apparently the famous 'dancing sun' of Fatima is often reported from other Catholic shrines, including Walsingham in England. Whatever one's view of miracles, this is a useful guide to what the believers believe. **GJM**

Mike Dash. *Borderlands*. Heinemann, 1997. £16.99.

This is a substantial work in every sense. Weighing in at just over 500 pages, it covers the whole range of Fortean and paranormal topics from UFO abductions to ghosts, cryptozoology, earth mysteries, visions and much else, the Borderlands between everyday consensus reality and the mysterious land of Magonia. Each chapter is in itself a good introduction to its topic, well illustrated with summaries of cases and case studies. Yet it is much more than a scissors and paste assemblage from the files of Fortean Times, of which Mike Dash is the publisher. Dash avoids the 'Fortean correctness' of some writers who refuse to comment on or make any assessment of the mysteries they describe. He is prepared to say what constitutes good and bad evidence, and unlike some Fortean is not afraid to actually come to a conclusion. The fact that in most cases that conclusion is broadly sceptical does not make this a 'skeptics' book in the manner of a CSICOP publication, for that scepticism comes only as a result of truly open minded enquiry.

Despite some advance publicity for the book and some newspaper coverage which seemed to set the author up as a kind of super-sceptic, Dash does not go into each topic seeking to demolish it. Instead, he sets out the evidence clearly and concisely, calling on his twenty years association with Fortean Times and the mass of information acquired there - the notes cum bibliography are themselves an excellent reading guide - then sifts through it carefully to actually judge (an intensely Forteanly incorrect concept!) which evidence stands firm and which disappears rapidly when confronted by awkward questions.

Of course, most of it does have a tendency to evaporate, and this is where Dash's true Forteanism comes into play, and his approach contrasts most clearly with the dyed in the wool sceptics. Because even if a phenomenon can be demonstrated beyond all doubt to be the result of misinterpretations, hoaxes and insufficient knowledge, he still realises that, because so many people have believed in it, it is still important because in most cases it has had a real impact on society and the individuals who have experienced it. Above all this is a book about belief; and emphasises the significance of 'vision and belief'.

One key chapter examines hoaxes. Most writers in this field skate rapidly over this topic, pretending that only an insignificant minority of UFO cases, ghosts, psychic phenomena, etc. are hoaxes, and decry anyone who tries to press the point as sadistic villains intent on reducing sincere witnesses to tears. Dash will

have none of this, nor does he accept for a moment the feeble argument "it couldn't be a hoax, he had nothing to gain from it." Dash recounts the remarkable case of two Florida men who fooled cryptozoologists with a bizarre hoax. This involved a huge amount of effort, including making and wearing massive concrete boots and striding determinedly for hours at night to produce a line of over 1000 giant flipper prints along the beach at the Florida seaside town of Clearwater. Yet they had 'nothing to gain' apart from the immense satisfaction of seeing so-called experts completely baffled by their handiwork. It is perhaps symptomatic of the lack of imagination shown by many researchers that they are unable to understand the motives of hoaxers.

Another chapter looks at 'hard evidence': photographs, repeatable experiments, hardware, independent witnesses. All, when closely examined, are shown to be flawed. Not perhaps fatally flawed, conclusive enough to dissuade any further investigation into the topic, because there is always something left which drives the investigator on to find the unflawed evidence. Dash quotes Jerome Clark in describing the evidence as an "exercise in futility and ambiguity that drive... investigators to distraction."

In his summing up chapter Dash is drawn by the weight of evidence he has presented in the previous 400-odd pages to conclude that the phenomena of the 'Borderlands' are stimulated largely by activity within the human brain, mediated by the culture in which that brain operates. People who are not prepared to read this book carefully probably will conclude that the author is another hard-boiled sceptic in the CSICOP mould, but those who read it carefully will see that he is simply telling the truth that he has discovered through his own study of the data. And despite, perhaps even because of, his sceptical conclusion is still keenly aware of the importance, the magic, and the sheer fun, of Borderland phenomena.

His concluding lines reflect the true Fortean, and Magonian, philosophy: "Mysterious and mystical experiences possess a powerful capacity to change lives. Because they are important, they should always be considered with an open mind, with a reluctance to rush to definite conclusions and with an eagerness to savour the rich variety of human experience. With, in short, a sense of wonder."

It is those researchers who are so anxious to deny the basic human involvement in the creation of Borderland experiences who reduce them to a sideshow rather than demonstrating it as an essential part of being human. **JR**

Diane Purkiss. *The Witch in History; early modern and twentieth-century representations*. Routledge, 1996. £14.99.

So much has been written about witchcraft over the centuries, and there is so little agreement even as to what a witch is (if anything), that Purkiss has been able to fill a book with different literary and historical images of them. Modern writers may turn the witch of a few centuries ago

from a devil-worshipping conspirator into a cipher in psychological theorising, or a "clean, pretty herbalist with a promising career in midwifery". Purkiss's main concern with the modern period seems to be that feminist witchcraft is not proper feminism. "The myth of a lost patriarchy is disabling rather than enabling for women."

Rather more useful she then deals with the witch-hunting era in England, making

the point that the dangerous hag of some trials was not the only way the witch was depicted. In the Jacobean theatre she might be "the intervention of supernatural knowledge or belief into domestic and social affairs." Overall, however, this book is of more value for the specialist than the general reader. **GJM**





HOLD THE BACK PAGE

Budd Flite

What is it about loveable old Phil Klass that produces such alarming reactions in some people? Small, balding, looking like everyone's mischievous old uncle, this doyen of UFO sceptics seems to strike people speechless or make them come out in spots... well, not everybody, Budd Hopkins mainly. You've probably already heard about Budd's little storm-out at the *Fortean Times* UnConvention in May. In the popular TV current affairs quiz *Have I Got News For You* old-time Labour politico Roy Hattersley failed to turn up for one episode and his place on the panel was taken by a tub of lard... very satirical. Well, in the UnConvention's UFO Brains' Trust Budd was replaced by a rubber dummy, our old friend the 'Morgana' alien head. Hard to know what difference it made to the level of debate, as Hopkins' earlier contribution, an alleged account of the Linda Napolitano case, left the audience none the wiser. Most of it consisted of a boring rehash of tired old UFO cases. Artist Budd was careful

to mention how much he was looking forward to visiting art galleries while he was in London - thus giving himself an alibi when he found himself unable to be in the same room, let alone on the same platform, as Klass.

However, *Magonia* was ready. Our man in the chicken suit, fresh back from taunting politicians for being too sensitive to appear in TV debates before the election, went out in search of the unsettled ufologist. Cartoonist Matt Graeber practised his remote-viewing skills and came up with this picture of the dramatic confrontation in the Modern European Painting room at the Tate Gallery. *Magonia* says to other ufologists: you can run but you can't hide!

While the Cat's Away

Gloucester reader Justin Anstey sends us the latest cuttings on the catnapping panic as it spreads to that city. *The Citizen* newspaper reports a spate of missing cats from around the suburbs. The story started on March in the village of Hardwicke, which has been de-

scribed as 'a Bermuda Triangle for cats', after rumours circulated of thirty cats being kept in a shed. Local police visited a shed - "There were no cats and no evidence of cats," said PC Phil Hill, obviously a Fortean copper, who commented perceptively, "It's becoming like the myth of alligators living in the New York sewers." This did not satisfy our old friends in Petsearch, one of the main panic-mongering organisation, who claimed that the cats ended up in Eastern Europe where their pelts fetch up to £3.50 each. A likely story. In most of Eastern Europe a decent three-course meal with wine doesn't cost that much, let alone a moulting moggie's outerwear.

The story reappears in May, when a familiar villain turns up in the area: the famous white Ford Transit van. This one was distinctive in having the words 'Bristol Animal Sanctuary' written on it - a non-existent organisation according to the police. As in traditional men-in-black or phantom social worker stories, although a number of people claim to have seen the vehicle, nobody managed to get the registration number.

One eyewitness to an alleged catsnatch reported two vehicles were involved: "I was indoors and saw a tall skinny bloke... talking on a mobile phone. He put the phone in his pocket and a black Ford Sierra pulled up," claims Tracy Cook (29) of Tredworth. "He darted across the road and grabbed a black and white cat from my garden, put it in a big brown spud bag and got in the car... A bit further up the road one of them got out of the car and into a red one then both shot off at about 90 mph."

One voice of sanity in all this was Wendy Attwood of the Cats' Protection League, who looks

after cats which have been abandoned: "Many people think that if their cat has gone missing something sinister has happened, but nine times out of ten they are wrong. Cats stray well away from their original abode for a lot of reasons. Males which have not been neutered will go miles after a female..." Hmmm. I think we'll stop right there.



Post Trauma

Ufological philatelists will remember that every country which has ever issued a postage stamp depicting a UFO has shortly afterwards experienced the overthrow of its government - vide Grenada, Equatorial Guinea and Mongolia. Expect political turmoil in the tiny state of San Marino, whose post office (one of the Republic's main sources of revenue) has just issued a stamp marking a UFO congress (not one that *Magonia* was invited to, so it can't have been very important). As my other picture shows, the design represents a group of rather vague and dazed-looking people, presumably ufologists, wandering around, staring aimlessly skywards at a variety of astronomical phenomena. So at least the designer has had first-hand experience of ufologists.

